

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SAA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-14 TRSY-06
HA-05 /129 W
-----074613 272106Z /70

R 262057Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5500
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT

UNCLAS MADRID 08586

E.O. 11652: N.A.
TAGS: MR, AG, MO, SS, SP
SUBJECT: SPANISH PRESS INTERVIEW WITH ISMAEL OULD AMAR

REF: MADRID 8318

1. SUMMARY: IN INTERVIEW EXCERPTS PUBLISHED JULY 26 IN A MADRID DAILY, ISMAEL OULD AMAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MAURITANIA'S NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL AND MINING COMPANY (SNIM), UNDERLINED THE NECESSITY OF ENDING THE SAHARAN WAR THROUGH FIRST SETTLING ON AN AGREED APPROACH WITH MOROCCO, AND THEN REACHING AN ACCORD WITH "THE OTHER PARTIES" TO THE CONFLICT. AMAR CALLED ON ALGERIA TO DEMONSTRATE GREATER FLEXIBILITY, AND HE ADVOCATED A "BROADER SOLUTION" TO THE FUTURE OF THE MAURITANIAN ZONE OF THE SAHARA THAN SIMPLE "CONFEDERATION" WITH MAURITANIA. END SUMMARY.

2. MADRID DAILY EL PAIS JULY 26 PUBLISHED RATHER DISJOINTED EXCERPTS OF AN INTERVIEW WITH SNIM MANAGING
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DIRECTOR AMAR BY THE PAPER'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO NOUAKCHOTT, DOMINGO DEL PINO. AT THE OUTSET, DEL PINO POINTS OUT THAT AMAR CONSISTENTLY EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS "JUST A BUSINESSMAN," AND THAT HIS OPINIONS WERE PURELY PERSONAL. BUT THE SPANISH JOURNALIST ALSO TAKES PAINS TO SIGNAL AMAR'S QUICK SUPPORT FOR AND INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH THE LEADERS

OF THE COUP. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PUBLISHED EXCERPTS FOLLOW:

3. REASONS FOR THE COUP. "DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THAT WE IMPLANTED WITH INDEPENDENCE IN 1960 HAD BEEN GRADUALLY ABANDONED, TO DEGENERATE FINALLY INTO (PURELY) PERSONAL POWER...HERE IT IS MORE APPROPRIATE TO SPEAK OF A COUNTERCOUP...EXCESSIVE STATE INTERVENTIONISM, THE MULTIPLICATION OF IMPEDIMENTS TO PRIVATE INITIATIVE, THE PROLIFERATION OF STATE ENTERPRISES IN SECTORS WHERE THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE EXISTED, HAVE LED TO THE COUNTER-COUP...AND OF COURSE THERE IS THE WAR AS THE FINAL REASON. MAURITANIA CANNOT SUPPORT THIS WAR..."

4. ENDING THE WAR. "I BELIEVE THAT AT THIS MOMENT NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW THE WAR CAN BE ENDED...I PERSONALLY AM CONVINCED THAT PEACE IS POSSIBLE ONLY AS THE RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT BY ALL THE PARTIES...OUR COUNTRY CANNOT SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION ALONE. IT IS NECESSARY FIRST TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO, IN ORDER THEN TO BE ABLE TO REACH A SOLUTION WITH THE REST, EVEN THOUGH IN MY OPINION THE SAHRAWIS ALONE COULD NOT MAKE WAR...WHEN WE DECLARE THAT WE WANT TO FIND A SOLUTION WITH OUR BROTHERS THE MOROCCANS THAT WILL BRING PEACE, THAT MEANS THAT IF ALGERIA REACTS AS SHE HAS IN THE PAST MAURITANIA COULD SEE ITSELF OBLIGED TO STRENGTHEN ITS MILITARY DEFENSE AND (FOREIGN) UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY SUPPORT TO OUR COUNTRY COULD INCREASE. MOREOVER, WHAT WOULD MOROCCO'S ATTITUDE BE TO A NEGATIVE REACTION ON ALGERIA'S PART? NEVERTHELESS, THE SITUATION WAS COMPLETELY BLOCKED...AND FOR THAT REASON MAURITANIA HAS NOW BUILT BRIDGES WITH A VIEW TO UNBLOCKING THE CONFLICT."

5. MAURITANIA AND ALGERIA. "WE MUST FIND A SOLUTION WITH ALGERIA...THE NEW GOVT HAS BUILT A BRIDGE TO ALGERIA, AND THE ALGERIANS ALSO FIND THEMSELVES IN A DIFFICULT POSITION...IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, IT IS UNDOUBTABLE THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN AFFINITIES BETWEEN US AND THE ALGERIANS, JUST AS THERE ARE WITH THE SAHRAWIS...OUR FUTURE RELATIONS CANNOT BE BASED ON ANYTHING OTHER THAN FRIENDSHIP. WHEN WE HAVE PEACE, WE WILL HAVE TO LEARN AGAIN TO WORK IN COOPERATION."

6. A NEW SAHARAN STATE? IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE POSSIBLE FORMATION OF A CONFEDERATED STATE INCLUDING MAURITANIA AND THAT PART OF THE SAHARA CURRENTLY UNDER ITS JURISDICTION, AMAR REPORTEDLY STATED: "WITH WHOM ARE WE GOING TO FEDERATE -- 10,000 PEOPLE? NO, IT IS

NECESSARY TO SEEK BROADER SOLUTIONS, SINCE A CONFLAGRATION
IN NORTH AFRICA WOULD ITSELF HAVE MUCH BROADER IMPLICA-
TIONS..."

7. FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW BEING POUCHED. TODMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID08586
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780308-1108
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780719/aaaaapvu.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f202586c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MADRID 8318
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1881989
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH PRESS INTERVIEW WITH ISMAEL OULD AMAR
TAGS: PINT, MR, AG, MO, SS, SP, (AMAR, ISMAEL OULD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f202586c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014